

**TO: Labor and Public Employees Committee**

**DATE: February 15, 2007**

**RE: Raised Bill No. 7034, An Act Concerning Collective Bargaining Rights For In-Home State Subsidized Day Care Providers**

Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Carolyn Thompson. I run a licensed in-home day care in Bridgeport.

I urge you to support Raised Bill Number 7034, **AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR IN-HOME STATE SUBSIDIZED DAY CARE PROVIDERS.**

I sometimes feel that people don't fully appreciate the role an in-home day care provider plays in the life of a young child. Every day is a day that children are learning and growing. Although I am paid to watch children during the week I find my house full of children even on days that my day care is closed. On Sunday, I teach pre-school and Sunday school at West End Tabernacle CME Church in Bridgeport.

Many parents prefer in-home day care because they know that their children will get one-on-one attention that is impossible in a large daycare facility. I know because I started my career in childcare working in just such a facility. One of many examples is a one-year-old child named Timothy. Timothy has a speech problem that might have been missed in a large daycare facility but that I was able to spot very early because of the amount of time I spend with each and every child. I directed his parents to the "Birth to Three" program, where speech pathologists were able to intervene and begin to work with Timothy immediately.

I am not a babysitter but a teacher. I take that job very seriously and have my Child Development Associate Degree (CDA). It is not required that in-home day care providers pursue a CDA, and many don't because of the expense, but I feel that the more educated I am, the better I can educate the children I care for every day. In my day care, children learn their names, colors, shapes, and ABC's. As soon as I see a child pick up a crayon, I begin teaching. I am doing the best I can to prepare young minds in my community to be successful individuals.

After 15 years as an in-home day care provider, I believe that I should have access to a fair wage and quality, affordable healthcare. Instead I have no health benefits, not because I do not need them but because I cannot afford them. My wage is low to begin with, and often the parents don't have enough money to cover the Care 4 Kids co-pay, reducing my earnings even more. I am forced to decide between watching their children for free or for less than my weekly rate and not watching their children at all, leaving them unable to work.

The best way to improve childcare is to give in-home childcare providers a voice, and the only way to give in-home childcare providers a voice is to give us the right to bargain collectively through a representative of our choosing. I know we can do better here in Connecticut. Please Support Raised Bill Number 7034.

Carolyn Thompson  
237 Wells St.  
Bridgeport, CT 06606  
203-336-9662